Preaching to the converted?
Who attended the Camborne, Cornwall Corbyn rally in August 2017?

The political party rally was reinvented by Jeremy Corbyn. Despite retaining the rally as an election campaign strategy, Labour calamitously lost the 2019 general election. Did something go wrong with this strategy? This paper analyses the results of a survey of participants in a rally in Camborne, Cornwall in 2017, close to two marginal constituencies. It finds that very few participants were not already dedicated Labour voters. The paper warns of the danger of advertising these rallies only through closed mobilisation channels. For improved efficacy, rallies in marginal constituencies might more widely advertise using open channels to a broader range of people.

Introduction

On the morning of 13 December 2019, Labour Party members and supporters woke up to a shock. Despite a second impassioned electoral campaign from the Labour Party, which built on the momentum of the relatively successful 2017 campaign, Boris Johnson's Conservative Party had won the 2019 general election with a clear majority of 365 seats (gaining 47) compared to the Labour Party's 203 (losing 59 including in its traditional heartlands). This was a significantly different result from the 2017 election. Prior to the 2017 election, some pundits had predicted a landslide victory for Theresa May's Conservative government (Harrop 2017, Heath and Goodwin 2017: 356, Jackson 2017) and electoral failure for Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party (Bale 2016). It was deemed a difficult time for the Labour Party: the membership was pushing the party to the left, whereas the parliamentary party believed that anything other than a centre-left position was electoral suicide (Richards 2016).

Yet, in comparison to 13 December 2019, there was widespread surprise on 9 June 2017 for a different reason. In 2017, election results revealed that the Labour Party increased its share of the vote by more than 40%, resulting in a hung parliament: 381 seats for the Conservatives, 262 for Labour. Labour had achieved its highest vote share increase since the second landslide victory of Tony Blair in 2001 (Heath and Goodwin 2017: 346). Jeremy Corbyn's

short-term general election campaign in 2017 was, retrospectively, deemed successful (Dorey 2017). It was characterised by a very active social media presence and rallies in both safe and marginal seats. At the first PMQs after the 2017 general election, Labour MPs – even those previously sceptical of the Corbyn project –welcomed Corbyn to the front bench with a standing ovation. The campaign generated what has become known as Corbyn-mania, a phenomenon perhaps best illustrated by crowds of thousands of people at Glastonbury festival enthusiastically and melodiously chanting 'Oh Jeremy Corbyn' to the White Stripe's Seven Nation Army rhythm after a notable speech. His well-attended rallies were heavily televised and arguably a key factor – alongside an effective social media campaign – that facilitated Labour's better-than-expected electoral performance in 2017 (Goes 2017).

This paper is not an exploration into what went wrong for Labour in 2019, but it uses this as a starting point for interpreting the effect of rallies on election results in Cornwall. It argues that, in the summer/autumn of 2017 – when Labour was preparing itself for a snap election that did not take place – and again in the winter of 2019 – in the run up to the general election – rallies might have been used more strategically by Labour, especially in Cornish swing seats. To help make this argument, the paper analyses a unique data-set generated from a survey of participants at a Corbyn rally at The Heartlands, Camborne on 10 August 2017. The rally was geographically close to voters in the two swing seats of Camborne and Redruth and Truro and Falmouth. It compares these results to what is known more generally about Labour Party members and Corbyn supporters, and finds the results to be broadly similar. This suggests that the rally involved preaching largely to the converted, and therefore was of little utility in helping Labour to gain those relatively few more voters needed to win seats from the Conservatives. This argument is further borne out by Labour's failure to win these seats in 2019 after a second rally in Falmouth, which had a similar member/supporter-targeted mobilisation strategy.

In 2017, Labour had made significant gains in both of these Cornish constituencies. In Truro and Falmouth, Labour took 38% of the vote (up 23% from 2015) compared to the Conservatives' 44%. Labour made more progress – albeit marginal – in 2019 (+0.7%), but the Conservatives made bigger gains (+1.6%) and won the seat once more. In Camborne and Redruth, the result was even closer in 2017, with Labour achieving 44% of the vote (up by 19% from 2015) to the Conservatives' 48%. In 2019 Labour in Camborne and Redruth lost 8% of votes and the Conservatives gained 6%.

When thinking through the notion of preaching to the converted, it is important to consider the ways in which targeted local rallies were advertised. We can learn from literature on social movement mobilisation that closed communication channels – i.e. those that rely on membership – are unlikely to attract newcomers to a cause (Walgrave and Klandermans 2010; Saunders et al 2012). The NHS Rally with Jeremy Corbyn and Jon Ashworth on 10 August 2017 was advertised by South West Labour and then through local party channels, only one week before the event. It is also important to note that the event took place on a Thursday, perhaps further limiting its reach and appeal for potential participants. A later pre-2019 election Green Industrial Revolution Rally with Jeremy Corbyn and Angela Rayner, in Falmouth on 27 November 2019, was also advertised at short notice and only through closed channels. Party members and supporters were the first to be alerted that the event was happening and the tickets sold out quickly making it difficult for newcomers to the party to hear about the event, let alone attend. Clearly more might have been done to use these rallies to reach out to swing voters who might have been able to make a difference to the close election results.

This paper makes a useful contribution to the literature in two ways. First, it provides, for the first time, evidence from a systematic survey of the people who *actually attended* a Corbyn rally. Of course, one rally is not representative of all the Corbyn rallies that took place around the country (2015-2019), but it is considerably more scientific than a lot of recent guess work. This objective measurement of who it is that attends Corbyn rallies contrasts with common misrepresentations of Corbyn supporters as unintelligent idealistic youth who have oftentimes been belittled to 'fan club' status by the commentariat (Allen 2019). Evidence suggests that Corbyn supporters are far from this caricature. Many of them are middle class, well-educated and fairly active party members. It is misfortunate that Corbyn himself, his politics, his supporters and the rally phenomenon sit outside of conventional ways of thinking about politics and doing political science in the UK. The fact that they have been misunderstood provides even stronger motivation to contribute this data to the political science record (Allen 2019).

A related advantage is in the use of an adapted version of the protest survey methodology. According to Dryzek (2000: 164), standard survey research 'can only pick up the echoes of past situations in which people were engaged politically'. Fortunately, there is by now an established methodology to contextualise political participation: to 'catch' people in the act of

participating in a Jeremy Corbyn rally (see, for an applied example, Rainsford 2017). I worked with a team of volunteer researchers using an adapted version of the protest survey methodology (Klandermans et al 2009) to collect data from a random sample of protest participants at a Jeremy Corbyn rally in Camborne, Cornwall, in August 2017. Through analysis of this data, the paper provides a profile of the types of individuals that engaged with Corbyn rallies.

A second key contribution of this paper is that it allows us to focus on the 'rally' as a short-term election campaign strategy. The role of the rally has frequently been overlooked in analyses of campaign strategies in established European democracies in recent decades. This is not only because they have been rarely used in electoral campaigns (especially in Britain) but also because emphasis is increasingly given to online campaigning (e.g. Gibson et al 2003, Anstead and Chadwick 2008, Lilleker and Jackson 2010), or to the use of fake news and disinformation (see various entries in Jackson et al 2019). It has been noted that Labour has sought to target 'weak' party voters and marginal seats since the 2001 general election (Whiteley and Seyd 2003), but there is clearly a fine line to be drawn between using the rally as a means to reinforce existing support and to generate new support. Generating new support is clearly more important in marginal seats and yet the evidence suggests that the mobilisation strategies of the Cornwall rallies in 2017 and 2019 were reinforcing existing support more than generating new support.

The paper proceeds as follows. First, I provide more background information about the Jeremy Corbyn rally surveyed. Second, I summarise the recently published literature on Labour Party and Corbyn supporters. Next, I introduce the adapted Caught in the Act of Protest project survey methodology and comment on the representativeness of the mailed back survey data. After this, I present analysis of the survey data. In the results section, I describe the characteristics of rally participants and also build upon previous literature on Labour Party members by comparing and contrasting sub-groups of participants (see Methods for more detail). The conclusions reflect on the use of rallies in marginal constituencies, stressing the need to reach out beyond preaching to the converted.

The NHS rally with Jeremy Corbyn and Jon Ashworth at which we conducted the participant survey analysed for this paper took place on a hot and sunny mid-week day in August in Camborne, a small town in southwest Cornwall. Although the event was poorly advertised, it

was – for the size of the town – fairly well attended. The population of Camborne is only 20,010 (2011 Census). This is very small compared to the population of Gateshead, which has a population of 120,046, where Jeremy Corbyn drew one of his largest crowds of around 10,000 people in the run up to the 2017 general election on 5 June (Kahn 2017). We know that the participants came from farther afield than Camborne, but it is true that the population in and around Camborne is not only considerably lower but also much more sparsely distributed than in Gateshead. To give an indication of the relative success in terms of the mobilised turnout, we can divide the estimated rally size by the population of the two towns and discover that, proportionately, the Camborne rally was almost as well attended. The Gateshead rally was the size of 8.3% of the population of Gateshead. In Camborne, it was not far behind at 7.5% of the population.

The rally was billed as an event to send a 'positive message to those seats we have to win to form the next government'. The specific focus was on the NHS, with contributions from Shadow Health Secretary Jon Ashworth, staff from the NHS, local party activists and, of course, Jeremy Corbyn himself. Not only was the proportion of participants compared to the size of the town not much lower than for the huge Gateshead rally, but also most participants were enthralled to see their hero speak, and in the chatter I overheard afterwards everyone was positive about the experience. But what might we expect to be the socio-demographics of this enthusiastic audience?

Who are Labour's members and Corbyn's supporters?

Labour Party members have traditionally been thought of as members of the working class, but its voters *and* its members have become increasingly middle class overtime. Bale et al (2019a: 31) found in 2017 that 77% of its members were middle class, that nearly half (48%) were women, that they were highly educated (57% have a university degree) and the majority (55%) were over 46 years of age. Just over one-third of Labour Party members earn more than the median salary for the UK of £30,000. Party membership across all UK political parties is predominantly white, making Labour's white membership of 96% about average. What else do we already know about Labour Party members and Corbyn supporters in particular?

Leadership support

Diamond (2016:18) states that Corbyn supporters can be divided into three groups: 'baby boomers', who were disillusioned with New Labour; young people alienated by austerity and high university fees; and white collar employees in the public sector who stood to lose most under Conservative policies to shrink the state. These groups were offered hope for a 'different vision of society after nearly a decade of spending cuts, tax rises, and missed deficit reduction targets' (Diamond 2017). Indeed, Labour made marked electoral gains in 2017 among the routine middle class (13 points) and the professional and managerial class (10 points), as well as capturing large swathes of the youth vote (66%) (Dorey 2017). A quantitative analysis of Labour Party members finds that strong supporters of Jeremy Corbyn are more likely to be female, left-wing, anti-capitalist and have lower income compared to those who support him less (Whiteley et al 2017).

Activity in the Labour Party

Bale et al's 2017 survey of Labour Party members (2019a) found that low intensity acts – for which people do not need to leave the home – are most commonly participated in by Labour Party members. In 2017, 64% 'liked' a party post on Facebook, 40% (re)tweeted a party message, and 56% displayed an election poster. Medium intensity acts – for which leaving home is required but overall commitment is low – were engaged in less commonly. 32% had delivered leaflets, 25% attended public hustings and 5% driven voters to the polling station. Among the highest intensity acts, canvassing was the most popular activity, engaged in by 27%, whereas only 4% had helped to run a party committee room, and as few as 0.8% had stood as a candidate. Evidence suggests that those engaging in high intensity activism are more likely to be pursuing a career in politics (Bale et al 2019b).

Party activity at low, medium and high intensity appears to be differentially distributed across Labour Party members who join at different times. Members who joined *after* the general election in 2015 have been more to be more likely to restrict their activism to 'online clictivism' (Poletti et al 2016). In the words of Bale et al (2017), the new Labour Party members 'talk the talk but they don't walk the walk'.[i] Party members in general – across parties – are more likely to be active in off-line activism when they see their political view points as more extreme than the party itself, but the same does not hold for on-line activism (Bale et al 2019a, Webb et al 2019).

The literature further distinguishes between those who are supporters of the Labour Party (they have not joined but they support it in principle) and members. In the 2010 election, Labour Party supporters proportionately engaged in two-thirds of the activity of members (Fisher et al 2014). However, the aggregated impact of supporters is not to be belittled because there are more of them than there are members, hence, Fisher et al's (2014) suggestion that party members are 'not the only fruit'. Whereas members do proportionately more than non-members on an individual level, they do less than supporters in aggregate (Webb et al 2017).

Far fewer supporters than members were found to have engaged with the Labour Party on social media, to have displayed a poster, handed out leaflets, attended hustings or canvassed. (Webb et al 2017). In 2017, over 75% of Labour Party members had engaged in low intensity activity, compared to just over 25% of supporters. The proportions of supporters engaging in medium (7.0%) and high (2.4%) intensity activity is markedly lower than for supporters (52.2% and 37%, respectively). Those more active in election campaigns are socially liberal, post-material and have strong feelings about the EU (Webb et al 2017). The literature has less to say about the differences between full members and registered supporters. There is, however, a sense that registered supporters might be light-touch with regards to party activism (Garland 2017).

New joiners and re-joiners

New joiners and post-2015 re-joiners of the Labour Party members have been found to be distinct from those who joined earlier. 'Belief in the party leadership' was not a very important reason for pre-2015 members to join the Labour Party (Whiteley et al 2017) – only 43% of those who joined before 2015 agreed it was a 'very important reason'. This compares to 77% of post 2015 general election members who agreed it was a 'very important' reason. The proportion of those who considered that leadership was important was 82% of those who joined during the leadership campaign and 96% of those who joined after Corbyn had become leader (Poletti et al 2016).

In addition to their being more supportive of Corbyn, Whiteley et al (2017) also find that new recruits to the party are less well educated, more gender balanced (older members were more likely to be male), have lower income, class, education and age, and have higher fear of poverty. Consequently, recent Labour Party members are sometimes considered to consist

disproportionally of the 'left-behind'. They also consider themselves to be more left-wing. However, that they *perceive* themselves as more left-wing does not mean that they actually are. Measures of left-libertarian values tend to have similar distribution across the sub-samples of old and new members, despite new members placing themselves more firmly on the left. It is also important to note that re-joiners – the subset of Labour Party members that left the Party for a period, but re-joined in or after 2015 – are also likely to have high levels of support for Corbyn (Whiteley et al 2017). This group have been found to be older than new members, but are notably more left wing.

In summary, if it is true that Corbyn was 'preaching to the converted', we would expect to find that the participants in the Heartlands Rally will have similar socio-demographic characteristics to Labour Party members, high levels support for the leadership and the Party's manifesto, similar levels of existing activity in and for the Labour Party as members and to already be Labour Party voters. Based on this review of the literature on Labour Party supporters we might also anticipate the following findings:

- Corbyn rally attendees with higher levels support for the leadership are more likely to female, left-wing, employed in the public sector and be either young or from the baby boomer generation compared to those with lower levels of support.
- Corbyn rally attendees who are not members of the Labour Party are less engaged (measured by number of activities and their intensity) in party activity than registered supporters / affiliate members, who, in turn, are less engaged than full members.
- Corbyn rally attendees who joined the party during or after 2015 are more likely to support Jeremy Corbyn, to be younger (and consequently less well educated), from lower classes and more left-wing than continuing members.

Methods

The data collection protocols for this study comprise an adaptation of the protest survey methodology (Klandermans et al 2009), which has systematic procedures for a) ensuring that questionnaires are distributed as randomly as possible and b) for assessing response bias (see Walgrave and Verhulst 2011 for a specification). For this study, a team of eight researchers worked together in pairs to conduct the survey. Each pair consisted of one experienced researcher who interviewed one in exactly every fifteen adult participants as they entered the rally site and also gave them a mail back questionnaire, and one less experienced researcher

who handed out a mail back questionnaire to one in every three people (excepting the fifteenth person, who was covered by the interviewer). The four pairs of researchers were stationed at the four main entry points to the site to ensure that every rally participant had a random chance of being selected.

We prepared 1,000 survey booklets and 200 short interviews. The interviews contain a small sub-set of the questions asked in the mail back questionnaire to allow us to make comparisons across samples. In the event, we handed out exactly 900 surveys and interviewed 101 people. Overall there were only 9 refusals for the face-to-face interview, suggesting a very high response rate for survey of this nature (92%). The team reported in the post survey debriefing meeting that there were very few instances when it was impossible to keep up with interviewing one person in every 15. We are therefore confident that our interviews are a relatively representative sample of those in attendance. We received 336 completed mail back surveys, providing a very reasonable response rate of 37%. That we interviewed one in every 15 participants and conducted 101 interviews allows us to make a fairly accurate estimate that the rally consisted of 1,520 participants.

Tests for representativeness of the mail back data are produced by making comparisons between the random face-to-face data and the presumably less random, potentially response-rate biased, mailed back data. However, the differences between the two samples are mostly very small (see Table 1), revealing that the mail back data is acceptably representative without the need to apply survey weights. This contrasts with most protest surveys, which usually find that mail back questionnaires over-represent the politically interested, the better educated, women and older participants (Walgrave et al 2016). In the case of the Corbyn rally data, binary logistic regression finds no significant predictors of being in the F2F sample compared to the mail back one.[ii]

<Insert Table 1 about here>

The data from the face-to-face interview and the matching questions in the mail back survey are show in Table 1. This data indicates (across both sub-samples) that the Corbyn rally participants were disproportionately female (59%) and that over 2/3 of them decided a week beforehand to participate in the rally (note that the event was only advertised a week before it happened). 92% of rally participants claim that they voted in the general election of 2015,

and 96% in 2017. This compares to a 66% and 68% turnout of the electorate, respectively. Around one third were attending a rally for the first time. They talk about politics with friends and acquaintances, but not too often, and they are very interested in politics. One-third had a degree (this does not include those who have post-graduate degrees) and the mean age is around 50 years. I provide more detail on the demographics of the sample after introducing the variables included in the analysis.

Analysis

The data are mostly presented as descriptive statistics and bi-variate analysis. I also include an ordered logit regression to predict intensity of party activity. The analysis focuses particularly on respondents' *socio-demographics*, their *support for the leadership*, their *support for the 2017 Labour manifesto* and their *activity in the party.* The analysis shows the small amount of variation in support for the leadership and party activity across socio-demographic groups and different sub-groups of *membership*. *Support for the leadership* is a scale variable comprised by totalling the scores for three questions measured on a 4- or 5-point scale relating to a) likelihood that Corbyn will be the next prime minister; b) approval of Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party; and c) how well Corbyn is doing as leader of the Labour Party.[iii]

Support for the manifesto is measured by rally participants' agreement (on a 5-point scale) with a series of items lifted directly from Labour's 2017 manifesto. The items included are abolition of university fees, fair domestic rent and secured domestic tenancies, free education for all regardless of age, increased availability of social housing, commitment to maintaining and supporting the NHS as a public service, channelling more resources into crime prevention services, public ownership of the railways, HS2, legislation for clean air, safeguarding habitats and species in and around the marine environment, prohibiting neonicotinoids, ceasing the culling of badgers, greater state support for the arts and culture.

Activity in the party is measured using a classification borrowed, but adapted, from Webb et al (2017) and Bale et al (2019a). The survey asked respondents about a range of activities undertaken on behalf of the Labour Party in the past 12 months from this list: displayed a poster, donated money to the Labour Party, delivered a Labour Party leaflet, attended a Labour Party meeting, helped at a Labour Party function, canvassed on the telephone or in person on behalf of the Labour Party, liked or shared a Labour Party post on a social

networking site and managed or administered a social media page on behalf of or to promote the Labour Party. Drawing on Webb et al (2017) and Bale et al (2019a, b) I group these activities as low, medium or high intensity. Liking Labour posts on Facebook, displaying a poster and donating money to the Party are classified as low intensity activities. These all happen inside the home. Medium intensity activities consist of handing out leaflets, attending a meeting or helping at a function, these take place outside of the home. Managing or administrating a social networking site and canvassing are classified as high intensity. It takes substantial effort to manage or administer a social networking campaign, even if it does take place inside the home. These high intensity activities require acting as ambassadors for the party. The variable is coded so that those who have done a mixture of low, medium and high intensity activism are coded into the highest category (i.e. high intensity). Those who have done both medium and low intensity activity are categorised in the medium intensity category.

Type of membership refers to whether the participants are not at all a member of the Labour party, whether they are an affiliate/registered supporter or a full member. *Membership* is also classified in a second way related to when the members joined the Labour Party, if they did at all. It is a nominal variable where:
0 = not a member of the Labour Party
1 = joined before 2015 and remains a member
2 = re-joined in 2015 after a lapse in membership (re-joiner)
3= joined in or after 2015.

Given this paper's emphasis on the potential effect of the rally in terms of swinging seats from Conservative to Labour in Cornwall, it is also important to examine the group I have defined as 'snappers'. These are individuals who did not vote for Labour in 2017, but who would have done so should a snap election have been called in Autumn 2017. This group is important because there is a strong possibility that the rally will have persuaded them to vote for Labour. Moreover, knowing what is distinct about this group can provide strategic direction to Labour in relation to which groups of the public to target in rallies in the run up to the next general election.

In the ordered logistic regression, the dependent variable is *intensity* of activity in the Labour Party (none, low, medium or high as described above). Independent variables included in the

analysis are type of member (non-, new or old), age, whether participants work in professions dominated by public sector work (e.g. in education, health and social service), gender, authority and left-libertarian scales[iv], social class (using Oesch 8, a nominal scale), support for Labour's manifesto pledges[v] and for Jeremy Corbyn (again scores) and political interest, which is an established predictor of party membership and political activity. A full set of variable codings is provided in the Appendix.

Findings

Socio-demographics

As we learned from Table 1, Corbyn rally participants in Camborne were disproportionately female (notably more so than Labour Party members in general, Bale et al 2019) and nearly all of them voted in the general elections of 2015 and 2017. They were highly educated – nearly one third had a degree, another quarter had a Masters degree and nearly 5% had obtained a PhD. In total, 62% were educated to degree level or higher and the average age was 50 years. Very few of the participants surveyed were youth (aged less than 24, just 5%). In comparison, more than half were in the baby boomer generation (51%). A reclassification of their occupation in Oesch8 class categorisation finds that the most common class category was socio-cultural profession (43%) followed by manager (16%) and service workers (15%). 41% of them had public sector jobs and almost exactly half classified themselves as lower or upper middle class (the same as for lower or working class).

Almost exactly one quarter of them resided in the Truro and Falmouth constituency, with slightly fewer from Camborne and Redruth (23%) – the constituency in which the rally was held. 15% were from the St Ives and Isles of Scilly constituency. Attendees were also there from St Austell and Newquay (11.9%), North Cornwall (6.8%), Devon constituencies and even farther afield (4.7%).

Women rally attendees were disproportionately distributed across the different party membership groupings, being present in marginally greater proportions than men among non-members and notably greater proportions among re-joiners and those who joined recently (around 2/3 of these groups). Women rally participants constituted a minority of long-term Labour members, perhaps reflecting shifts in the gender balance of the Labour Party membership over time. Not surprisingly, the baby boomers are more likely to be long-term or re-joined members, partly as a function of their age. It is important to note that new members

of the party were 47% of rally participants, followed by 30% non-members, 9% re-joiners and 13% long-term members. Socio-cultural professions were the most commonly held jobs across all of the types of membership identified, but most notably so for re-joiners. Managers are the second most popular class for long-term members. 27% of long-term members who participated in the rally were managers.

Party members from each sub-category are over 50 years of age. In order, from youngest to oldest, are the recently joined, non-members, those who re-joined and long-term members. Scores on the authority and left-libertarian scales are similar across each sub-group, at around 11 for the authoritarian scale, and 22 for the left-libertarian scale.

<Insert Table 2 about here>

Support for Corbyn

By-and-large, rally participants were strongly supportive of Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party. They thought he was doing a good job of leading the election and thought he stood a good chance of becoming the next Prime Minister. The mean score for support for Corbyn was 11.9 out of a total of 13, which is extraordinarily high (see Figure 1). The mean support score is over 11 for many different subgroups of rally participants – men and women, public and private sector workers, youth, baby boomers, those who (re)joined the party at different times, and those who are affiliate supporters or members. He was almost universally popular among participants: only 6 of the respondents in the whole data set gave him a total support score of 9 or less. In contrast, 43% gave him a score of 13 – the maximum possible. Those with support above the mean of 11.9 consisted disproportionately of women (61%), those *not* working in public sector jobs (57%) and age groups that are *not* baby boomers (52%) or youth (94%).

<Insert Figure 1 about here>

The mean support score was the highest for the re-joiners (12.3), followed by the new members (12.2), non-members (11.7) and lowest among the long-term members (11.3), although only by a small margin, with no significant differences across sub-samples. Re-joiners to appear to have been motivated to have re-joined the party because of its turn to the left. It is worth noting that this group of members was slightly more youthful (7% under aged

24) than the non-members (4% under the age of 24), and those joining for the first time (6%). Re-joiners were also distinct in their subjective social class profile. This subgroup lacked managers (compared to 15% in the whole sample) and has markedly more socio-cultural professionals (63% compared to 42% in the whole sample). Education levels of re-joiners are similar to other members (67% have a university degree, 64% for old members and new members), but markedly higher than non-members.

If re-joiners and new members were motivated to re-join the party because of their support for Jeremy Corbyn as leader, we might expect them to have claimed to be more left-wing than their counterparts. This bears out in the data. The mean left-right-self-placement score (a 0-11 point scale) for those who re-joined or joined for the first time after 2015 was 1.6, compared to 2.0 for older members and 2.3 for non-members.[vi] Interestingly, although the re-joiners and new members considered themselves to be more left-wing, they did *not* hold stronger left-libertarian views. The correlation between left-right-self-placement and left-libertarian views was -0.45 for non-members, but only -0.19 for new members and -0.14 for old members, suggesting that the latter two groups, especially, were less left-wing than they thought they were.

Support for the Labour Party manifesto

Most participants had moderate to high levels of support for the Labour Party manifesto pledges (see Figure 2). Yet this differs markedly across different policy issues. The least popular policies, from lowest to highest, were the HS2 railway, supported by only 15.7% of rally participants, and two controversial countryside issues: banning neonicotinoids to protect bees (62.5%) and ceasing the culling of badgers (67.0%). The other policy pledges were supported by around 90% or more of the rally participants (see Figure 3), with little variation across sub-samples by membership type.

<Insert Figure 2 about here>

<Insert Figure 3 about here>

Activity for the Labour Party

Ten percent of the participants had not engaged in *any* of the activities in support of the Labour Party that were listed in the questionnaire. 32% had engaged only in low intensity

activity, 28% in a combination of low and medium intensity activity and 30% in low, medium and high intensity activity. The majority of those who had not engaged in any activity were non-members of the Labour Party. It is important to point out that 30% of the respondents were *not* members of the Labour Party. Those who had engaged only in low intensity activity were disproportionate among non-members (48%) or people who had recently joined (44%). Medium intensity activity had been carried out disproportionately by those who had recently (2015 or later) joined the party for the first time (59%), but also by non-members (18%). High intensity activity was dominated by those new to party membership (52%) and less so by longer-term members (28%) (Table 3).

<Insert Table 3 about here>

The ordered logistic regression (Table 4) model found that intensity of party activity among rally participants was predicted by their membership (as we also found in the bivariate analysis), but also by their support for the Labour manifesto and their interest in politics. All other variables included in the model were insignificant.

Snappers

In the sample, only 27 individuals were snappers, that is, rally participants who did not vote Labour in June 2017, but who would have done so in a snap election in the Autumn of 2017. By some accounts it might be viewed as impressive to have 27 snappers, but a quick examination of their towns of residence reveals that the 'snappers' were split too thinly across their respective constituencies (St Ives and Scilly Isles [8], Truro and Falmouth [7], St Austell and Newquay [4]) as well as other places in even smaller numbers to have had very much impact on a swing for Labour. If there was a snap election the rally might have gained 7 new voters (the number of snappers) for Truro and Falmouth, whereas 3,792 additional new voters would be required for Labour to win the constituency. Camborne and Redruth had only one snapper, when it requires 1,580 additional votes in order to win the seat. This is not to suggest that it is deemed feasible to attract that many snappers to a rally, but it serves to stress how why it would have been beneficial to attract more potential converts. Snappers are very well educated (74% are educated to degree level), disproportionately female (71%), 56 years of age on average and in work. Differently from rally supporters in general (of which they are a sub-sample) 32% identify themselves as lower or working class and one-third of them are retired.

Discussion and conclusions

The findings illustrate a number of similarities between the profiles of Labour Party members, of Corbyn supporters and of participants in this rally. Just under half of Labour Party members are female (Bale et al 2019), whereas the rally attracted 59% women. The difference here can be accounted for with the knowledge 30% of our rally participants were *not members* of the Labour Party and that women are more marginally more likely to be non-members. The class profile also differs slightly: 77% of Labour members across the country are in the middle classes (Bale et al 2019), but only 50% of the respondents were. This might reflect the regional economy of Cornwall. However, similar to studies reporting on Labour Party member demographics, we did find rally participants to be highly educated (62% had a degree, compared to 57% of Labour Party members) and, like Labour Party members, they are, on average, in their 50s. We did not ask a survey question about ethnicity, but the white composition of crowd was notable.

Our survey of participants found very high levels of support for Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party across all sub-groups. Contrary to Diamond's (2016) characterisation of Corbynistas, those with above average levels of support for Jeremy Corbyn were not baby boomers, the young or white collar workers. However, those rally participants new to the Labour Party (post-2015) were a little more youthful than longer-standing members, more likely to be women and were more likely to exaggerate their left-wing ideology, consonant with Whiteley et al's (2017) account of new Labour members.

Chiming with Bale et al (2019a) the regression results and bivariate analysis seem to support the idea that intensity of activity on behalf of the Labour Party intensifies with longevity of party membership and when people are full members (rather than affiliate members or supporters). This is not to belittle those rally supporters who do less for the Labour Party. The fact that there are more of them means that – aggregated – they make a very significant contribution to Labour Party campaigns (Fisher et al, 2014).

All but 10% of the rally participants had participated in some form of activity on behalf of the Labour Party, and nearly all of them had high levels of respect for the leader. These high levels of dedication should not be surprising: only the most dedicated Labour and Corbyn supporters would attend a rally during the working week on a hot sunny day in the middle of

August in Camborne. Contrary to previous work, which suggested that new members 'do not walk the walk' (Bale et al 2017), this study has found that rally attendees who are new members did actually engage in medium intensity activity. It was the non-members who mostly stuck to low intensity activities. Long-term members and re-joiners – who we might term 'party stalwarts' were the membership subgroups most involved in high intensity activity. The data also showed that affiliated members and Corbyn supporters are not necessarily light touch in their active support for the party. They engage in low *and* medium intensity activity more than full members, whereas high intensity work for the party is more common among full members.

One curious finding is that a comparison of left-libertarian scales and left-right-self-placement suggests that Corbyn supporters over-estimate the extent to which they are left-wing. Other studies have pointed out that newer members are more left-wing. However, previous studies have used only left right self-placement, which constitutes a respondents *perception* of how left-wing they are, rather than a reflection of their actual political ideology. It seems probable that the media's branding of Jeremy Corbyn as 'hard left' or 'Red Labour' has encouraged new members to rate themselves as more left-wing than they really are. This is, potentially, a weakness of other work that relies on left right self-placement.

Another interesting outcome of this investigation is the relatively small number of people who could have contributed to a swing vote, who I call 'snappers'. The advertising of the event was kept within Labour circles and there could have been much more scope for the event to have reached out beyond the usual suspects. By some accounts, the presence of 27 'snappers' in the audience is impressive, but, when spread across constituencies, there were certainly not enough to create a ripple effect to reach out to the thousands who would be needed to persuade to vote Labour in order to swing the vote away from the Conservatives and towards the Labour Party. The similar mobilisation strategy through closed channels (Walgrave and Klandermans 2010) likely did little to maximise the impact of the 2019 rally in Falmouth.

The literature sends us strong signals that that campaigning in marginal seats is likely to be fruitful (Whiteley and Seyd 1992), but the effects are somewhat dampened by preaching to the converting. Of course, there are benefits in motivating local existing audiences: 'recruitment, retention and energizing local party members … can bring significant electoral

benefits to the Labour Party' (Whiteley and Seyd 1992: 594), but the stakes for the Labour Party have been high in Cornwall at recent elections. These rallies appear to have missed an important opportunity for reaching out beyond the converted. More strategically targeted use of the rally, targeting participation not just of youthful / first time voters, but also of the older female voters who identify as working class (which comprised the majority of our 'snappers'), would have been beneficial. Using open mobilisation channels (beyond Labour) to advertise the rallies would be beneficial for this endeavour.

Labour might also learn from surveys like this a lesson or two about the appeal of its manifesto among its most ardent supporters. The Camborne Corbyn rally participants mostly highly supported the policy propositions taken from the manifesto. The slight reservations expressed about ceasing badger culling and banning neo-nicotinoids – compared to the other much more popular policy propositions – could be due to parochial factors. Cornwall has a strong farming heritage, as well as a mining one. By far the least popular policy was HS2, which was only supported by 16% of rally participants, compared to national polls that suggest public support is 20-30%. It is hard for Cornwall residents – cut off by slow train lines to London – to have much support for levelling up initiatives that keep Cornwall peripheral.

This paper makes an important contribution to the literature, but it would be remiss to not also mention some weaknesses. On the positive side, I successfully adapted the protest survey methodology to apply it to a Jeremy Corbyn rally. The mail back sample was extraordinarily similar to the random interview sample. What I initially thought was a major benefit in terms of the sample representativeness, became one of the more difficult aspects to deal with. I soon came to learn that at least part of the reason that for this similarity was the relative homogeneity of the crowd. This makes it difficult to conduct convincing analyses on sub-groups of rally participants. This contrasts with previous work on protest, where it has been relatively easy to spot differences in gender, age, left-right attitudes and political interest among novices, returners, repeaters and stalwarts (Saunders et al 2012).

The relative homogeneity of Cornwall Corbyn rally attendees is provides an interesting challenge to – at least for Cornwall – inaccurate caricatures of Corbynistas. What we have been unable ascertain is whether this homogeneity of supporters is unique to Cornwall. One obvious way of extending the study is to conduct similar survey work of other left-wing party

rallies in different constituencies. It may well be that the most interesting comparison will be across towns rather than across sub-groups of rally participants.

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Table 1. Test for representativeness of the mail back data

	Mail back n=336 **(%)**	**F2F** n=101 **(%)**
Female	59	59
Decided to participate a week ago	69	68
Voted in 2015 GE	93	92
Voted in 2017 GE	97	96
Rally novices	44	31
Talks politics often	35	43
Very interested in politics	73	74
UG degree (not higher)	31	33
Mean satisfaction with democracy (0-10 scale)	3	3
Mean age	51	49

Table 2. Socio-demographics by type of party membership

	Non-member	Long-term member	Re-joined	Recently joined	Total (n)
Female	55	35	67	64	182
Baby boomers	48	68	63	44	161
Class					
Socio-cultural profession	36	42	63	41	129
Service workers	22	2	3	17	49
Managers	11	27	0.0	18	48
Education					
UG degree	35	41	23	31	103
PG or prof qual	23	23	43	33	95
Age (mean)	54	61	57	52	315
Authority	13	12	11	11	276
Left-lib	22	22	23	23	316

Note: percentages are in columns

Table 3. Intensity of party activity by type of party membership

		Non-member	Long-term member	Re-joined	Recently joined	Total (n)
No activity	n	26	0	1	3	30
	%	87	0	3	10	100
Low	n	49	3	5	45	102
	%	48	3	5	44	100
Medium	n	16	10	11	53	90
	%	18	11	12	59	100
High	n	6	27	13	49	95
	%	6	28	14	52	100
Total	n	97	40	30	150	317
	%	31	13	10	47	100

Note: percentages are in rows.

Table 4. Ordered logistic regression predicting intensity of activity in the party (none, low, medium or high)

	Coefficient	SE	z	P>|z|
Type of member (baseline non-member)				
Affiliate / supporter	1.74	0.45	3.83	0.00
Full member	2.78	0.40	6.86	0.00
Age	0.01	0.01	1.27	0.20
Public sector job	-0.70	0.37	-1.90	0.06
Gender (male)	-0.17	0.31	-0.53	0.59
Authoritarian scale	0.02	0.05	0.34	0.73
Left-libertarian scale	-0.03	0.06	-0.46	0.65
Social class (Oesch 8)				
Manager	-0.33	0.83	-0.40	0.69
Office Clerks	-0.73	1.18	-0.62	0.53
Petit Bourgeoisie	-0.08	0.91	-0.09	0.93
Production Worker	-0.09	0.90	-0.10	0.92
Service Workers	-0.71	0.87	-0.82	0.42
Socio-Cultural Profession	-0.11	0.80	-0.14	0.89
Technical Profession	-1.25	0.95	-1.31	0.19
Support for Jeremy Corbyn	0.17	0.12	1.42	0.16
Support for Labour manifesto	0.13	0.04	3.01	0.00
Political interest	0.96	0.33	2.96	0.00
/cut1 |	10.0	2.9		
/cut2 |	12.7	3.0		
/cut3 |	14.4	3.0		

Notes: The model has 192 valid cases. Log likelihood -201.10. RE chi2(17) = 97.01***, Pseudo R2=0.19.

Figure 1: Histogram showing support for the leadership

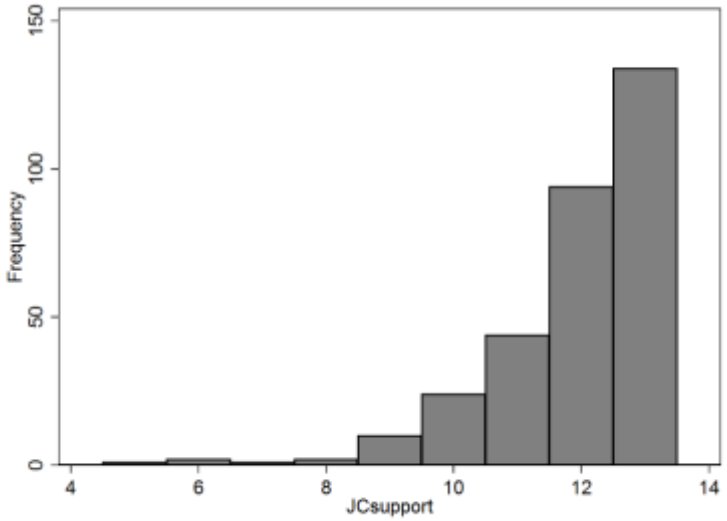


Figure 2: Histogram showing rally participants' support for Jeremy Corbyn

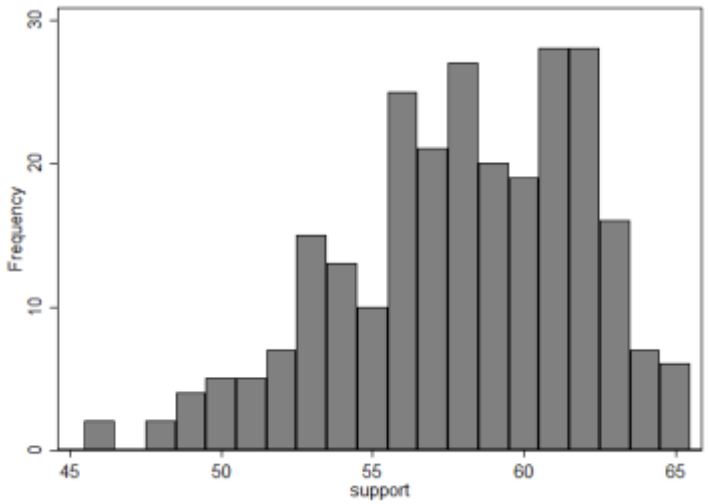
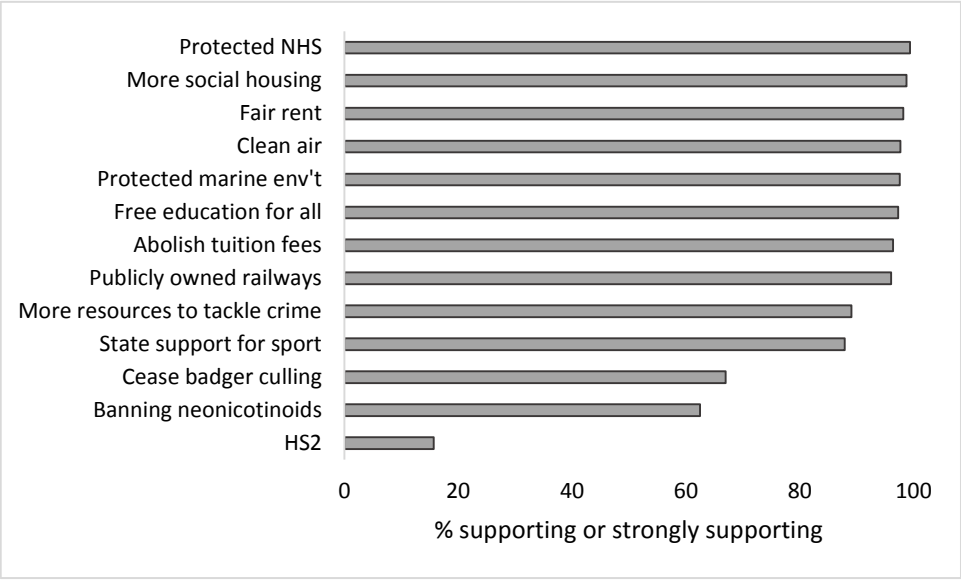


Figure 3: Histogram showing rally participants' support for key policy pledges



Appendix: Variable measurement

Variable type and name	**Survey question or computation**	**Coding**
Socio-demographics		
Age	In what year were you born?	2017-year born
Babyboomer	Computed: born 1946-1964	0= no 1= yes
Youth	Computed: born1992-2001	0= no 1= yes
Gender	Are you …?	1= male 2= female 3= prefer not tosay
Education	What is your highest level of education?	0= none, did not complete primary education 1= primary 2= GCSEs or equivalent 3= A'Levels or equivalent 4= Foundational degree / HNC 5= Degree: BA/BSc 6= Masters of other PG qualification 7= PhD
Employment	What is your employment situation? Tick as many as apply. I work fulltime I work part-time I am freelance/self-employed (without staff) I am self-employed (with staff) I study fulltime I am unemployed/between jobs I am retired I am a housewife / househusband Other	1=ticked 0=not mentioned
Occupation	What is your occupation, or what was your last occupation	String
Employees	In your main job do / did you have responsibility for supervising the work of other (or your own) employees	0= no 1= yes for 1-9 persons 2= yes for 10 persons or more
Oesch	Social class calculation, derived from occupation and employees	1= large employers 2= technical profedssions 3= (associate) managers 4= socio-cultural professions 5= petit bourgeoisie 6= production workers 7= office clerks 8= service workers
Subjective social class	People sometimes describe themselves as belonging to the working class, the middle class, or the upper or lower class. Would you describe yourself as belonging to the …?	1 = upper class 2= upper middle class 3= lower middle class 4= working class 5= lower class 6= none
Support for the leadership		

JC for PM	How likely or unlikely do you think it is that Jeremy Corbyn will ever become prime minister?	1= not at all 2= not very 3= somewhat likely 4= he will be our next PM 5= I do not know (re-coded as missing)
Approval of JC	To what extent do you approve or disapprove of Jeremy Corbyn as leader for the Labour Party?	1= strongly disapprove 2= disapprove 3= neither approve nor disapprove 4= approve 5= strongly approve 6= I do not know (re-coded as missing)
Leadership performance	Do you think that Jeremy Corbyn is doing well or badly as leader of the Labour Party?	1= very badly 2= badly 3= not badly or well 4= well 5= very well 6= I do not know (re-coded as missing)
Support for the leadership		An aggregated scale of JC for PM, Approval of JC and Leadership performance.
Support for the manifesto		
Support for policy proposals	To what extent do you support or oppose the following policy proposals? (see p.9 for a list of the policy proposals)	1=strongly oppose 2=oppose 3= neither oppose or support 4= support 5= strongly support 6= I do not know (re-coded as missing)
Support for the manifesto		An aggregated scale of support for policy proposals
Activity in the party		
Have you	Have you, <u>in the past 12 months</u> … Displayed a Labour Party election poster Donated money to Labour Party funds Delivered Labour Party or candidate leaflets Attended a Labour Party meeting Helped at a Labour Party function Participated in phone or door-to-door canvassing on behalf of the Labour Party Liked the Labour party or shared its posts on social media Managed or administered a social media page or network in support of the Labour Party	1=yes 0=n0
Intensity of activism	See pages 10-11 for explanation	None= 0 Low= 1 Medium= 2 High= 3
Membership		
Type of member	Are you a member, supporter, or affiliate of the Labour Party?	0= I am not a member, affiliate or supporter

		1= I am a member of the Labour party 2= I am a registered supporter of the Labour party 2= I am an affiliated supporter (through a trade union or socialist society)
Re-joiner	If you are a member, supporter or affiliate, in which year did you first join the Labour Party? If your membership, supporter or affiliate status has ceased for any period of time, please indicate the approximate years when it stopped and restarted.	0= not a member of the Labour Party 1= joined before 2015 and remains a member 2= re-joined in 2015 after a lapse in membership (re-joiner) 3= joined in or after 2015.
Ideology		
Left-libertarian	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Government should redistribute income from the better off to those who are less well off Big business takes advantage of ordinary people Ordinary working people do not get their fair share of the nation's wealth There is one law for the rich and one for the poor Management will always try to get the better of employees if it gets the chance	1= strongly disagree 2= disagree 3= neither 4= agree 5= strongly agree The variable is an aggregated index.
Authoritarian	Young people do not have enough respect for traditional British values For some crimes, the death penalty is the most appropriate sentence Schools should teach children to obey authority Censorship of films and magazines is necessary to uphold moral standards People who break the law should be given tougher sentences	1= strongly disagree 2= disagree 3= neither 4= agree 5= strongly agree The variable is an aggregated index.
Left-right self-placement	In politics people sometimes talk of "left" and "right". Where would you place yourself on this scale, where 0 means left and 10 means right?	0-10 scale 99= don't know (re-coded as missing)

[i] It should be noted that the timing of this survey meant that new members did not have the opportunity to be active in the election campaign – they joined after the 2015 election and the study was published before the 2017 election.

[ii] DV= 1 for face-to-face, 0 for mail back. Chi-square tests of model coefficients = 1.24 sig. 999, Nagelkerke R Square = 0.005, none of the variables are significant. The lowest p-value is 0.4.

[iii] Cronbach's alpha for this variable is reasonable at 0.59. Due to the low number of items, I also ran a Spearman Brown reliability analysis, which has a similar score of 0.58.

[iv] Authoritarianism is measured by the items 'young people do not have enough respect for traditional British values', 'for some crimes the death penalty is the most appropriate sentence', 'schools should teach children to obey authority', 'censorship of films and magazines is necessary to uphold moral standards' and 'people who break the law should be given stiffer sentences'. Each is measured on a five point agree/disagree Likert scale and summed to make the authoritarian scale. Cronbach's reliability coefficient is 0.72. Left-libertarianism is measured by the following items summed in the same way: 'government should redistribute income', 'big business takes advantage of ordinary people', 'ordinary working people do not get their fair share of the nation's wealth', 'there is one law for the rich and one law for the poor' and 'management will always try to get the better of employees'. Cronbach's alpha is 0.65. Factor analysis and PCA failed to find a sensible solution. Instead, I decided to retain them as two scale variables. Authority scale correlates modestly and positively (0.29) with left-right self-placement (where 0=most left-wing and 10=most right-wing). Left- libertarian score correlates modestly and negatively (-0.27) with left-right self-placement.

[v] Cronbach's alpha 0.70

[vi] One way ANOVA F=5.96, significant at the 0.001 level.